

Survey Methodology

A total of 1,883 news organizations were contacted for the 2019 ASNE Newsroom Employment Diversity Survey. Participants were mailed a postal invitation letter in mid-May 2019. Editors and past survey contact persons at those organizations were then sent emails starting a week later. Non-responding organizations received multiple email reminders throughout data collection. Additionally, follow-up phone calls were made to all non-responding organizations beginning in early June. All survey collection methods ended in late August 2019. In total, 428 news organizations responded, for a total response rate of 22.73 percent. This is lower than ideal; however, it is an improvement of five percentage points over the last year.

Among our respondents, 287 (67.06 percent) were from organizations with both a print and digital presence. Sixty-nine online-only organizations (16.12 percent) participated in the survey, and 72 respondents did not specify their organization type.

This year, we updated data collection methods to move from categorizing newswriters as either “newsroom leaders” or “all others,” which were overly broad to describe employment types across news outlet types. Instead, we relied on job classification according to Internal Revenue Service to distinguish contract-based workers from those who receive a salary. We also added a designation for newsroom managers—those who supervise other employees in the workplace.

Per feedback from the previous year’s survey, we added a nonbinary category for gender. We also updated slightly the categories of race to match categories likely to be used by the Census Bureau in 2020, added biracial/multiracial designations and Middle Eastern/North African ethnicity. We retained the “prefer not to disclose” and “other” categories for racial/ethnic identity, as well. We received a bulk dataset from one large media chain, which also included a category for employees who chose not to disclose race. As in the past, this survey is a reflection of only those organizations that responded, and lacks any kind of random sampling that would aid in statistical inferences of broad generalizability.